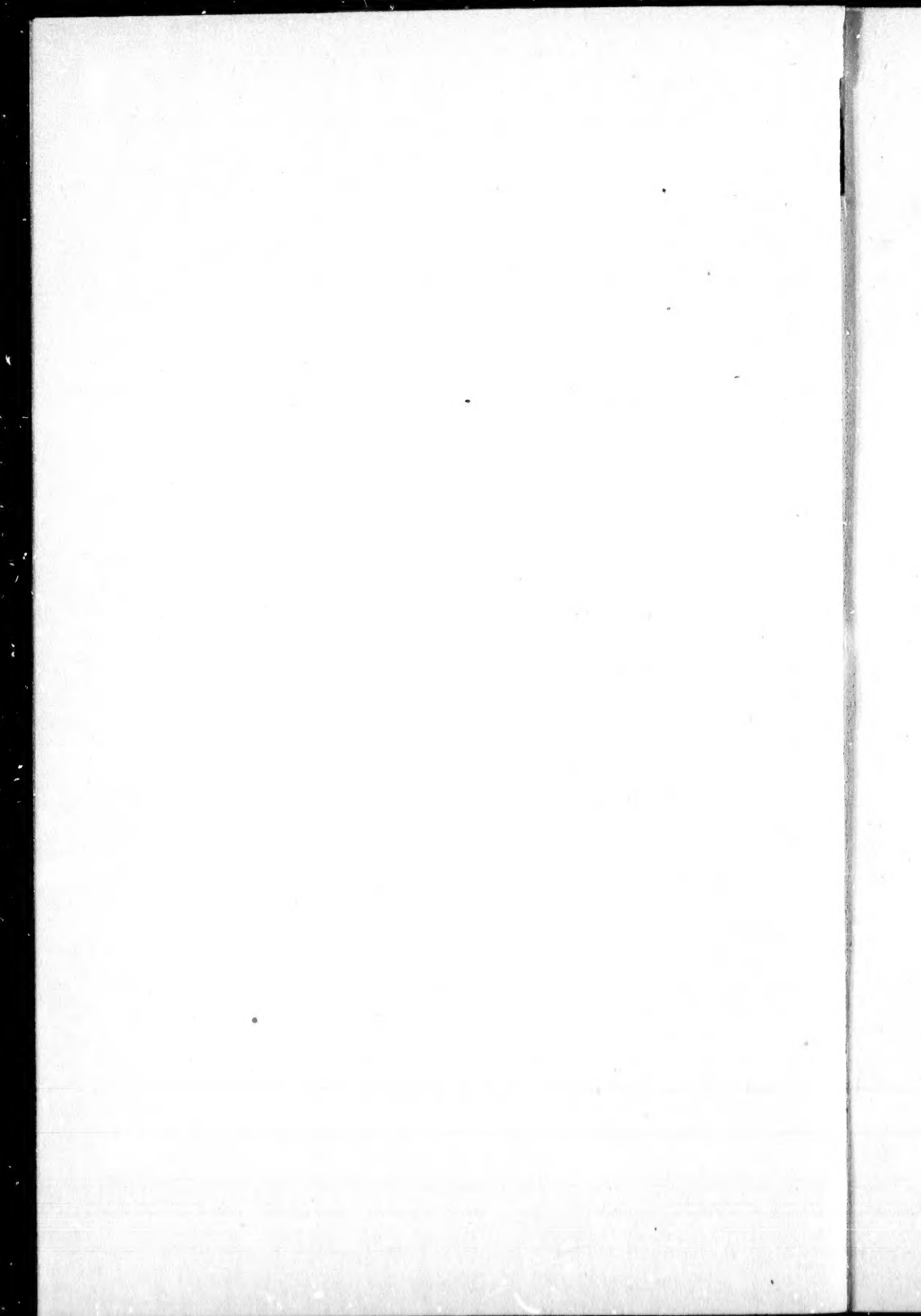




OUR
PUBLIC SCHOOLS:
THEIR WANTS.

An Essay,

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TORONTO:

PRINTED BY WM. LIGHTFOOT, 55 YONGE STREET.

1872.

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DEDICATION.

DEAR SIR,—

I have taken the liberty of dedicating this and its successor to you. I have no other excuse to offer than that of an earnest anxiety in the advancement of the popular cause.

If you do not concur in the opinion that the whole system of Public Instruction is wrong, no matter where pursued, you will at least admit that Primary Instruction is sadly defective: that so long as parents are allowed to withdraw their children from the school-house upon every little pretext of necessity, that we can never have very efficient primary training, and hence our structure becomes defective, and our objects partly defeated.

I see no remedy except *compulsion*. The word is not agreeable, but its adoption for the spread of knowledge ought to be deemed an extension of *freedom* instead of a contraction.

I am yours educationally,

GEO. BABINGTON ELLIOTT.

To JAMES HODGSON, Esq.,

Inspector Public Schools, Yorkville.

TORONTO, JULY 15, 1872.



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ONTARIO PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

PROBABLY at no time since the organization of Provincial Government has the great idea of popular education taken so deep a hold of the public mind as at the present. The bearings of intellectual and moral culture upon the social well-being are, to a considerable extent, understood, and the necessity of a thorough system of universal education—one that shall reach the entire masses, and carry an elevating force to the lowest conditions of society—is almost universally conceded. The duty of the Government to make available every possible resource for this purpose is recognized; while the history of legislation in our Province shows that the foundations of our Public School system have been laid with more liberality than wisdom.

And, as the superstructure rises in majestic and comely proportions by the untiring labors of those devoted to the work, the question meets us at every stage of advancement—What modifications are necessary to meet the constantly increasing and cumulating wants? For here, as in every great reformatory movement, the steps of embarrassment are driven on by the ever pursuing forces of necessity. We stand to-day upon a period of enlightened and expansive benevolence; but the stream widens, deepens into an unexplored sea, where new duties and nobler sacrifices await those who reach its troubled waters.

The great question for us is not so much what the future may demand, as what is the present need—what changes in our school system are demanded by present developments? We purpose briefly to give an answer to these inquiries.

First, we remark, that frequent changes in any system, whether the result simply of custom or of legal enactment, are always to be deprecated, even though such changes may introduce desirable modifications. Better submit to inconvenient

enactments than to endanger the success of the whole system by unstable and capricious legislation.

Our system of Public Schools is so intimately connected with all of the interests of society, that any attempt at its revision should be made with great caution, and the most enlightened experience and well developed principles be brought into requisition.

There seems to be an impression in the minds of many earnest educators in the Province, that *the whole* system of public instruction is wrong—not only that the subjects presented are too numerous, but that the text books are not at all adapted to the conditions of the Public Schools.

As one model after another is brought forward for public consideration, the impression is forced upon the mind that these reforms depend for success upon the *machinery* of education as well as upon the power which set it in motion. The laws which govern the distribution of forces in physics should not be overlooked in ethics; and evils should not be ascribed to defective machinery when there is a want of power to set it properly in motion.

Our Public Schools extend over the entire Province. From the great centers the ramifications run to the entire border, and into the four thousand school-houses scattered along these branches are the children of the Province gathered for instruction. Now it is here, at these extremities—upon these primary fountains—that agencies must be applied which shall send an invigorating and elevating force throughout the whole. It is in vain to expect that power, however strongly applied to the great centers, will traverse, unimpaired, the entire system, or even produce most desirable results in the immediate proximity. The best possible result will be a disproportionate development, while the remote parts will become enfeebled by the extraction of existing vitality. No error is more fatal to the interests of universal education than the attempt to sustain local institutions for privileged classes, and no more injudicious application of public funds can be made than to lavish them upon such institutions whose self-sustaining power is always sufficient for their support whenever its necessity demands their existence.

Nor do we believe the opinion correct which places the University, College and Academy, first in the list of agencies em-

ployed in the great work of education, especially when we consider the fact that not more than one-tenth of the great mass of mind can ever be brought under their influence. We cannot subscribe to the doctrine advanced in the last report of Superintendent Ryerson, which is substantially as follows:—In order to realize this whole idea in a provincial system, the Academy must be firmly coupled with the primary school, the University must form a thorough connection with the Academy. Is this really to be our position? Is this our great system of Public Schools published to fame? The tendency is to reduce us to a mere dependency upon local institutions, richly endowed, and manifesting strong centralizing tendencies, but which is barely able to lift up its own unwieldy proportions. We cannot accept the position at this progressive day. We claim for our Public School system entire independence of any local institution. It must be the foundation upon which all other educational structures rest; and while we admit the connection of higher institutions, we demand that the elevating force be here applied. It must be *vis a tergo*—the engine must be placed at the other end of the train—and the power thus applied will move the whole superstructure forward and upward, sweeping from its pathway the numerous local and partial institutions, and communicating an impulse to the Colleges and Universities they have never felt. Such has been the result in other places. Public High Schools have supplanted Private Academies, and Colleges have raised their standard of qualification for the admission of pupils.

We wish not to be misunderstood. We wage no warfare against any educational institution. Let private munificence seek such modes of manifestation as shall be desired; we only claim that public funds should be appropriated for the highest good of the masses.

No truth is more evident than that successful reform must begin with the primary schools. Here the foundation must be wisely laid, and no future embellishment of the uprising structure can supply the defects of an insecure and unstable basis.

The deficiencies in primary culture can never afterwards be supplied. All the care and skill of the academic teacher can never wholly eradicate the evils of an improper primary training.

We purpose to review the present system from a teacher's standpoint. Our experience enables us to enter into a comparison involving the system of no fewer than fourteen States of the American Republic, together with the schemes, for they can hardly be called "systems," of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island.

Let us place ourselves in the Queen City. In the basement of a large two-story brick building is a large school-room, crowded with children of from four to eight years of age. The walls of the room, not remarkably high, of course, for 'tis the basement, are hung with two or three tattered maps, charts or pictures, and a small black-board, innocent of chalk marks, hangs behind the teachers desk. Besides these, not a solitary piece of apparatus or appurtenance of education of any kind can be seen.

Place yourself in imagination in this school-room; watch the teacher as she calls up her classes one by one, and goes through the important facts that certain hieroglyphics are called by certain *names*, as a, b, c, &c.; that certain combinations of these characters are called by certain other names, as "cub," "man," and the like; that certain combinations of these latter names, as two and three, for example, are called by still other *names*, as five, six, &c. But if you wait to see the children receive any idea from all this, I fear you will wait long and get very little satisfaction. *Words* are plentiful, but ideas or material representations of names very few.

Let us ascend to the upper story. Here we find a spacious airy room, handsomely and conveniently furnished. The walls are covered with maps, charts, pictures, or black-boards. Closets, shelves, or tables, are loaded with all the apparatus and appliances a teacher can desire, for carrying on the work of education. The room is sparsely filled with pupils of from ten to twenty years of age. The desk accommodation is ample and modern. This room is presided over by an active, capable, earnest teacher, who labors diligently to interest his pupils in their work, and to push them forward into the higher mathematics and the dead languages.

Let us change the scene to a rural school-house in any school section, unlimited to any locality. Is it necessary to describe the internal scenery? Should the reader be asked to wade through the horrors of the Public School, in four thousand of

which there is a perpetual sameness, and that a dreary monotony as deadly in its effects to the mental strength as carbonic gas is to the physical. Now and then we find a man, possessing some talent and skill as a teacher, employed in urging forward the older and more advanced pupils, while he scorns and neglects the abecedarians as beneath his notice.

Are not these faithful pictures? Do you not recognize in them the representative school of the town and of the country? If you inquire for the result of this teaching, you will learn that children who have read scores of school-readers, containing a large amount of information, common and uncommon, have no *real* knowledge of the *things* they have read about. Children who have "gone through geography," as the phrase is, yet cannot describe the source, flow, and discharge of the nearest spring branch; who can do every sum in arithmetic, yet in the counting house are non-plussed at the first settlement of accounts; who have learned by heart every principle of grammar, yet cannot write a page without a grammatical blunder. It is not that these subjects are difficult, but the child has never been taught to *observe*, to *express*, his knowledge, and to apply it to the reality of life. The words of books may have become familiar, but the language of books has not been learned, simply because no language can be learned till the things, acts, and relations it represents, can be learned. Every where we find the younger children, whose plastic minds are so ready to receive impressions—who could so easily, under wise and earnest teachers, be led into virtuous ways, and whose faculties could so readily be trained and made fit to receive instruction in the *sciences*, crammed with hard words that stultify their intellects, and inured to vicious habits of mind, body and heart, that no amount of care, skill and talent, on the part of the teacher of the higher school, can wholly irradiate, but which demand his most patient and persevering efforts in abating before he can fairly begin to teach; while in the more advanced schools for the older pupils, who are supposed to be able to think abstractly, material representations are sometimes furnished in abundance.

Now, does it not occur, as we witness the increasing efficiency and excellence of the higher schools, to doubt the consistency and wisdom of this distribution of favors? We are aware that the necessity of more efficient primary schools is no new idea.

We know that the employment of the best teachers in such schools has been urged, not only by philosophers and theoretical educators, but by many of the best practical teachers; but we know also that the idea is extremely slow in being appreciated and carried out by the people. The mass of parents are not enlightened on such subjects. Very many mothers wish to make a nursery of the school-room. They send their children to school to be rid of them. Their greatest care is that they shall be kept out of harm as long as possible, and they are apt to think that any body can teach a primary school.

These sentiments and desires, considering that most parents have cares enough independent of their children to occupy them during the day, are natural enough, and not altogether unreasonable. Shall we then contend against them? Can we not rather, with some modifications, at least concur with and provide for them? Why not make school, at least the primary branch of it, more of a nursery, and take younger children, or at least more of the minimum age. The objections to this course are good only in our present circumstances, and with such schools as we have; not against schools in the abstract. But are these circumstances immutable? Do not these considerations suggest both the need and direction of reform? There is another inquiry tending to throw light on this subject, and to assist in the solution of the problem before us. What is the politico-social condition of our people? Do not a few ambitious leaders draw after them the great mass of men—men who have no minds nor will of their own, but meekly and blindly follow the lead of the demagogue, who is shrewd enough to talk soft flattery in their ears? Men generally take all truth upon trust. The shrewd and ambitious few take advantage of this fact to impose upon their credulity, and to reduce them to the support of their own selfish purposes. Now, is it for a want or knowledge of chemistry, latin, algebra, and the like, that the people are thus easily duped? Will the devotion of means by the Legislature to the making of scholars of children in their teens be the best method of securing that general intelligence and good sense that would make the masses independent of their self-imposed dictators? The encouragement of high schools, and the making of scholars in them, does not seem to us to effect the desired result. The masses are still left in ignorance. The favored few,

whose talents, leisure, or means, enable them to reach the high schools, are not at all the proper subjects of Provincial care. *They* are destined for an elevated social position, whatever may happen. By aiding them we only help to strengthen the power of leaders whom the blind masses follow. Let the educational energies of the commonwealth be directed into the primary school, and demagoguism, now so fostered by educating the few, must diminish and die out. We wage no war against high schools, but with the limited means appropriated by the Province for education, it is impossible to make primary schools what they should be without curtailing the expenses of the high schools. Besides, the latter do not so much need legislative aid, since a much greater proportion of those who would attend them than of those who attend primary schools, can afford, and are willing to pay the expense of tuition in private institution; while thousands of young children are wasting their youth in idleness, or worse than wasting it, in dens of mental and physical disease, because there are no proper schools provided for them. The same children, when a little older, cannot be spared from the labors of the farm, the house, and the shop, to go to school; and if they do go, they are set to the study of sciences beyond their comprehension, because their untrained faculties have been allowed to waste in their tender infancy.

The spirit of the School Law, not founded in *charity*, but in profound provincial policy, contemplates the training of *all* children in such wise that the greatest possible number of them shall become good citizens. Not scholars, nor teachers, nor farmers, any more than doctors, divines, or merchants; but members of the commonwealth, qualified to perform their parts in the machinery of society, not merely as voters and government officials—for these are only subsidiary to the ends of society—but as men and women, capable, by their own good sense, good morals, kindly affections, and skilful hands, of adding something to the general happiness. Of learning in the school-room sense of the word, very little is necessary; but of the cultivation of the powers by which we learn a training of the faculties to habits of observation, reflection and independent judgment, and of the muscles to healthy and active usefulness, much more is needed, than is generally acquired even in the highest schools.

To effect such a change as we propose, not only must the in-

tire personnel of the instructive profession be changed, but the modus must be completely revolutionized.

Society is an organic structure like the human body. The elementary particles of our bodies are arranged in filaments—filaments constitute fibers—fibers, tissues—tissues, organs and a combination of organs—each adapted to its place and functions—may be said to constitute the human frame. Individual persons constitute the original element in society. Of these are formed the lesser circles; the lesser constitute larger, &c., through various steps and gradations, and all together constitute a nation.

As in the human system, there are organs whose functions seem more or less important, and are therefore deemed more or less honorable. So in society, there are circles holding positions more or less useful, and consequently are regarded with more or less esteem. The honor ascribed to an organ of the body is justly derived from its importance to the physical structure; but the honor ascribed to a person or circle in society should be derived from two sources: first, from the good accomplished, and secondly, from the difficulties surmounted in securing that good. To those who through unwitting chance make great discoveries, or otherwise accomplish great good without labor, there is often given much undeserved honor; and also to those who perform great feats which are without good, and perhaps evil in result. A youth once received honor because he could stand upon one foot longer than any other person in Greece; but the philosopher replies, "I have a goose that can stand longer than he." Pugilists and warriors—although the philosopher calls them dogs and murderers—often receive the most enthusiastic praise. Ten thousand people rush to the river's bank to see a man play the fool upon a tight rope; and ten times ten thousand shout with cap in air at seeing one throw a triple somerset upon a chess-board, because he is a very great and successful gambler. But not so with the educator: he buys his honor, he earns a name, he surmounts great difficulties, and achieves great good.

The teacher evidently constitutes an originally designed member in the social structure; for of all animals man possesses the least natural knowledge or instinct, and infinitely the greatest by cultivation. Without culture he remains almost a mere animal: through culture he may rise almost to the dignity of an-

gels. The instructor of youth, therefore, occupies a position originally marked out by the *Creator*, and this position is of vital importance. It is to the social body what the eye is to man. A nation without instructors is like a man without a mind. The education gives bent to youth, and "As the twig is bent the tree is inclined." To know the child is to know the man: to guide the child guides the man: to wish the child is to wish the man—for from youth flow the impulses of old age. The teacher, therefore, is the engineer who manages the gun that gives direction to the ball. In fact, the world is just what the educator makes it. This holds true, for although the judgment cannot be so changed by education that right in all cases will appear wrong, or truth falsehood, or the opposite, yet the ill taught gives no heed to the dictates of truth or justice, and to the world is as if he were without the knowledge of these principles. So, in truth, as our harvest depends on what we sow—our fruit on what we plant—our lives on what we live—the world depends on what we teach.

But numberless are educators. Every father, every mother, every living thing, every rising sun, every star, every breeze, every storm, winter, summer, blossom, good or ill fortune—all are educators. But this is not enough: the teacher must be set apart to accomplish the work that nature and chance fail to do. He must act as pilot; he must make use of all other educators, and turn every stroke to account, as the sailor does the wind, which of itself would surely thrust the ship upon the rocky shore, but, when properly employed by the mariner, always drives to a safe harbor.

But who is the true teacher? who are the called? All are not teachers that occupy the teacher's chair. It does not make a man a general to sit on a general's horse, or a soldier to wear a uniform, or a scholar to bear a diploma. When schools are put up at auction, the rush of voices is almost equal to the shouting of New York omnibus drivers; some cry two shillings, some one, and some will even keep school for nothing, if they can live by boarding around. Thus the real teacher is kept out of his place, and the real talent for teaching is buried.

There is a time when a youth is neither one thing nor the other—neither boy nor girl, man nor woman—too proud to act the part of a child, unable to cope with men. These are days of

leisure—days of waiting. During this period a youth can afford to sell his time for little—for less than would be necessary to meet the demands of sterner years of life, when come deeper cares and broader interests. To this age of unsettled talents, of undefined principles, and undeveloped faculty, and to that class of talent that can afford to compete with it, we intrust the vital, the immortal spark, that liberty so dear to all—the future destiny of all our cherished institutions, and, to a great extent, the present and future happiness of ourselves and our children: and all this on the principle of the poor man's economy, merely because such experience and talent are cheap.

A cloud of wickedness and the resulting evils continually hang over us; but we perceive not whence it comes: we appear to strive against it, but, as it were, cut off the blaze without putting out the fire—dip out the stream without stopping the fountain. When we feel the rod of oppression, we war against it; when liberty is gone, we fight for it; we mourn over the growth of intemperance; weep over poverty; become excited over the meanness of tattlers, and the lies of slanderers; get mad over the deceitfulness of evil speculators, and the lawlessness of politicians—yet seek no preventive, nor lay the axe to the root of the evil. Men may play the hypocrite, yet they cannot hide hypocrisy—they ultimately show what they are—what they are educated to be. Character is a thing of development, and of exceedingly slow growth; and what that character is the life will show. "From the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Had the cow a lion's teeth she would live on prey; had the gazelle a poisonous fang it would bite like a viper; nor does a man lie without lies in his heart.

Now, we believe it is universally acknowledged that to train up children in ways of wisdom to pursue happiness where it can be found, is the most difficult task required of man, except that of self-control. And still the multitude do not see the necessity of seeking talent for that purpose, and cannot, with any degree of clearness, see the difference between a good and a poor school. The following lines express truly a very common idea of teaching, as compared with other occupations:

A ditcher's a ditcher, and a teacher's a teacher;
The one is a worker, and the other a creature:
If the ditch is digged, it's digged, and the water 'll run through it,
If the school is taught, it's taught, no matter how you do it.

There is a great difference between an image hewn out with a common axe and Power's most celebrated work, and that difference is easily seen : and there is no less difference between the poorest and the best school ; but the common eye does not discover it. There is a wide difference between brittania and platinum, imitation and pure gold, though it requires an experienced eye to see it. There is a wider difference between a good and a poor school ; and more skill is required to perceive it. A plowman once picked up two beautiful stones ; he was pleased with both for their brightness, and preserved them ; but in them saw no special excellence nor any difference. Years roll away : the farmer's son, with more discerning look, perceives instinctively marks of wealth on one. They are passed to a learned chemist, and are pronounced one a quartz and the other a diamond—the one not worth a dollar, the other not less than two hundred thousand. Thus with the plowman, in difference and blindness, do we pick up our teachers, and look upon our schools ; and while riches, true riches, are even in our hands, we are poor. We regard quartz and diamonds both as almost equally worthless stones, and generally seek quartz, because it is common and cheap, to occupy places that diamonds only can occupy with profit. As poor rough stones are the poorest things of earth, as it were, the lowest grade of earthly matter, so the fruits of a bad education fill up the lowest strata of *Hades* ; and as diamonds are the richest gems of earth, so the fruits of a good and complete education fill up the highest strata of Heaven. As *Hades* is beneath the earth, so are the stones of *Hades* beneath the stones of earth ; and as Heaven is above the earth, so are the jewels of Heaven above the jewels of earth. Instead of exaggerating the differences between good and bad schools—a true and a false education—we have not, and cannot reach them. The fruits of evil training are envy, malice, hypocrisy, lying, thefts, adultery, murders, meanness, poverty, shame, debauchery, drunkenness, insanity, madness, death, and a home mid terrors and the blackness of darkness, where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. Ah ! says the sluggard and the fool, these are all vain imaginations and figures of speech, while, as it were, half the reality is before his eyes. Were I a brute I would die with blinders on : were I a man I would live with my eyes wide open.

But, behold the fruits of true cultivation : Kindness, charity,

love, long-suffering, perseverance, faith and good works, moral and intellectual greatness, riches and honor, hope, purity, life immortal, and a home mid pleasures forever more, and joy that eye hath not seen nor ear heard. But all this, in the balances of the materialist and worldly-wise, will not weigh with gold and silver. A madman once went to a river's bank, fastened his own feet together, pounded his head furiously with a stone, and then threw himself into the deep flowing water. Being rescued, he said he designed to have struck harder, and to have left life enough to destroy himself by falling into the water. With the same blind and dogged perseverance do we chase the life of the school; first fetter it with poverty, and then otherwise circumscribe its sphere of action till it just knows enough to kill itself.

We call a man a fool that buys wooden nutmegs for his own use because they are cheap, and a man insane that destroys himself by putting out his eyes, that it may cost him nothing for the gratification of sight, or that cuts his palate lest he pay something for appetite.

It has been said that the teacher has no right to consider what will be for the good of the pupil, because men differ in regard to what good is, that he must teach the letter according to the letter of the law. Many are the sympathizers with this notion, and the path of the Public School teacher is so circumscribed—made so narrow—that it is very generally thought that the fool need not err therein.

So we look for grapes and find wild grapes—instead of the educator find the lad that should only hold his candle. The teacher's chair is occupied by those who are guided by no special training; marked by no natural aptness. In the old world the youth who learns a craft must, under a guide, experiment upon useless material. We permit youth, without a guide, to learn to teach by teaching; to experiment upon our children; to "teach the young idea how to shoot," while they themselves yet aim and shoot with their eyes shut; who feel as much out of place as an awkward boy with his first quill, in his first attempt with the carpenter's adz, or a woman throwing stones.

Still, money thinks such fit to keep school, and engages such to tattoo the immortal face—to stick the immortal soul full of poisoned arrows, ever to fester and bleed.

A man of experience is sought to fit a shoe; a skilful man—a

trained man—to fit a garment for the body; but the young, who have merely seen others clothe their minds, are deemed able to pin fig-leaves together to cover the shame of ignorance. Could we but behold the intellect grown up under such awkward, skillless guides, we would see a visage branded and tattooed worse than the wild African: it would appear like a wall built by a blind man, or the garden of the sluggard.

But the true, the real school-master is abroad, and may be found though he walks in other circles, and mingles in other pursuits, and wanders like birds driven from their nests by evil birds. John and Judas appeared alike to those who weighed not with spiritual scales; so men fitted by nature for the various callings appear alike to those who weigh not with the philosopher's scales, while they are as unlike as the pebbles and the sand. As the machinist prepares each piece, bolt and screw, for its place, so nature adapts men to their various occupations: the shepherd with his crook is at home with his flocks; the farmer with his plow; the mechanic with his plane; the merchant with his goods; the physician with his lancet; the lawyer with his client; and no less the teacher with his pupil. God has not forgotten that which is most needed. The peculiar natural fitness of a teacher appears in a full even organization, and, to a certain extent, he would be adapted to any place; for he must in measure be able to educate others for every place, and he leaves his own impression upon his charge. Many that hold the teacher's wand feel and act as much out of place as fishes in air—as birds in water. They look as anxiously for the end of a term as an ill child for the end of a weary night. But diffidence in the school-room, weariness of teaching, and ill success in the calling, do not always foreshadow a lack in natural gifts. Nature's songsters do not all sing, nor her musicians all play upon instruments. All must be taught.

We cannot here enter into an argument to show the necessity of more training schools for teachers. All the training schools in the world cannot make a teacher. Nature furnishes the material. It is the duty of Art to select and improve it.

In addition to natural and acquired qualifications, there should be promoted that interest in the cause—that love for its advancement—which is engendered by a dedication to the calling: thus

we would secure a new profession, which at least should be equal to, if not in advance of all others.

In this we ask what we ought to have—not what we expect to obtain at present. Unless we strive we certainly shall not conquer—unless we labor we shall die as we have lived. We must demand what we need, and get what we can. We do not expect to ascend like a balloon, with rapid motion; but like the growth of the oak. We are too much oppressed for a sudden reform. When the king is but one, reforms may be rapid; but when every man is a king, reforms and great changes must move on with the mighty tide, and come with the elevation and enlightenment of the public mind. Public opinion is proverbially slow, especially in reforms; but we have no right to hide behind our faults, and make a virtue of sloth. It is our duty to stand in the front ranks, and hasten forward with that persevering spirit which never loiters nor yields till the victory is won. We have exceedingly great obstacles to overcome; and if the Prince of the House of Persia withstood the angel one and twenty days, we shall be withstood one and twenty years. As a generation of Israel died in the wilderness, so must we wait and die before the promise fully comes. We must commence our work with self-examination and improvement.

In olden times leaders were teachers, and teachers were the leaders of the people. In Israel, prophets were instructors; in Greece and Rome, their great men. Nations never became elevated above their teachers. But the times have changed. The spirit of freedom has opened the way to self-culture. The man has a right to the throne who first reaches it. The world to the world lies open, and all men are invited to strive for the palm. The swift no longer wait for instructions, and, unless instructors rise with the flight of the world, pupils, by the aid of books, rush up the hill, and leave them in the smoke and fog at the base. Formerly teachers led the people through life, and their *ipse dixit* was the end of dispute; but now lads of twelve, who have idled away more than half their school days, often strike out, pass their teachers, and leave them to paddle on in their wake, while there is no *ipse dedit* this side of heaven in which they deign to acknowledge any confidence.

The people begin to see with their own eyes, and judge for themselves. The more they are educated by teachers, by self-

culture, and by experience, the more they see the emptiness of a one-sided education—the fault of our general system. They see that teachers often possess little more knowledge or skill than those under their charge. Every man and woman, therefore, feels perfectly competent to direct; and as none of them, neither patron nor teacher, are competent to direct in matters of education, there of necessity, will be as many opinions as people, and the teacher especially will find himself standing on live coals.

The people have discovered that he who gathers together a few elementary principles of science: who runs as he reads, and reads as he runs: who has dugged a stone out of a mountain—hewn a stick of timber—laid up a stone wall—faced a winter's storm half clad—struggled with want—mashed his fingers with a stone hammer—unnailed his toes with a beetle—been buried under a load of hay—thrown over the cart wheel into the road—kicked by the world, and gored by hard fortune: they have seen a youth thus educated undertake life's battle with the collegian, and win the prize. They have seen the one strong and vigorous, and the other feeble: they have buried one in the meridian of life, the other in gray hairs. They have seen one every where a practical man, and at home every where; the other lost if but off his line. They have seen the one kill a bear before the other could bethink himself to run. In terrors, and troubles, and billows, and storms, and battles, they have often seen the man schooled in the school of real life and action out-hero the collegian.

Our colleges, our public schools, and our high schools, must be improved, and our teachers elevated, else the common people will rise above us and tread us down, and we shall neither receive nor merit honor.

What we do is rarely well done, and what is well done is of little use for want of more. An eye without the pupil is useless; a single bolt taken from a steam engine might render the whole useless: so a man with a mighty intellect, stored with all sciences, is but a wreck. On every side we behold the want of completeness of culture; and every where the crooked tree tells of a crooked twig. Tattered clothes, shattered walls, and weedy, stony gardens, show ill culture. The imprint of a man in the mud of a ditch, the dens of drunkenness, debauchery, and ill-fame, mathematics and sensuality without sense; heads without

eyes, and bodies without heads—all shew that youth is not trained in the way he should go.

Let us cast our eye on the great panorama of the world. Here is a picture of shy, lean, haggard poverty, lingering with her ignoble progenitors, sloth, drunkenness, and gluttony—all foul children of an evil school. Here is grim, ghastly, ghostly *Disease*, nourished by ignorance and evil habits leading the pale horse. Here is a company of giddy youth, full of rioting and profanity, blind with sensuality, confident in the hope of materialism, running swift in pursuit of the foolish woman as fools to the correction of the stocks. They know not that the dead are there, and that her guests are in the depths of hell. There are mothers weeping over the erring, and fathers whose gray hairs come down to the grave in sorrow, lamenting the evils that have bereft them of their children, and put out the light of hope. Then among the gloomy crags, in the deep shade in slimy pits, in dark, gloomy haunted caverns, when closely pursued, flees the burglar, the incendiary, the assassin. Here they hide their ill-gotten gains, and secrete their implements of wickedness. Here are the tears of the Christian martyrs; there the blood of patriots; these are tyrants that tremble over the spoils of the innocent; those half-clad laborers are slaves; here are idolaters; here are they that deal in men's souls, and make merchandise of the weak; these are politicians exhibiting to the people large advertisements, bearing upon the outside retrenchment, reform, liberty for all, while upon the inside are a school of fishes, a gold-headed cane, and silver plate. There is a tumultuous mob, and yonder the smoke of a terrible battle; there horses stand in blood up to their bridles, and widows and orphans fill the earth with mourning.

The ancient world tells that what is has been. The rude heaps of crumbling, dingy, time-worn walls, the massive broken columns, the moss-covered towers, the ivy-grown palaces, the pyramids and fallen idols—tell that myriads sleep who were struck down by the bolts of the Almighty for the very sins that rest so heavily upon us. Each nation that has passed has looked upon its own greatness, and blessed itself with the cheering words—"This kingdom is without end." We cherish the same idea, that we are to become an extraordinary people, whose course is onward and upward without bound, but still the same mighty

hand rules, and the same cursings and blessings are placed before us. The last word of that book of books, that hath stood while nations have been scattered and laid in ruinous heaps, and that, although heaven and earth shall pass away, shall stand, are ominous words. "Behold I will send Elijah, the prophet, before the coming of the great day of the Lord, and he shall turn the hearts of the children to the fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."

Considering these things, what is befitting? Can a people be moved that these truths will not move? Is there motive enough in all this to arouse us? To whom shall we intrust our children? To whom our happiness, our homes, our liberties, our institutions, our lives, and our new nation? If there is a wise man on earth let him be sought for an educator of youth!

We doubtless feel the heavy burden that rests upon us. In our experience we have learned that children care but little for their own elevation: it is not in the nature of things that they should. We have seen, too, that parents care but little: for if it is true that men go where their hearts are, it can be no less true that parents' hearts are not in the school-room. Again, we have learned that those who live among us—who are neither parents nor guardians—care only to see the gulf that, as they say, swallow up their riches, swept away. Again, therefore, we say, that we must apply ourselves to self-examination and self-improvement.

The teacher must be a physiologist, that he may prune the youthful stalk and ward off disease, and cultivate vigor and life in the clay-house of the soul. It is his duty to give his pupil a knowledge of the demands of the physical nature, and send him out of the world not a decaying skeleton, but a *man*, reposing in strength and symmetry. We are too apt to pursue one motive or idea to the neglect of the others; but this leads to insanity—so doing, we pursue the way of the monomaniac. One nation cultivates merely the animal, another the mental, while indeed few individuals even have equally developed the animal, mental, moral and spiritual. All experience shows that as a body without a head, a head without an eye, or an eye without a pupil, so is man deprived of any of his component parts.

The teacher must be a metaphysician, and, as far as possible, understand the length, breadth, and depth of the intellect, and

the hidden powers of the soul. He must understand human nature, and the human character. How can a man build that which he does not comprehend, or cultivate that whose nature he does not know? We would not trust a child to manage a steam-engine, because he lacks in judgment, and knows not the power and action of machinery. We would not trust a "land-lubber" with the helm of a ship in an ocean storm, for his want of knowledge; but the child can as well guide the engine, and the land-lubber the ship, as the untutored mind the mind.

Every teacher should be a moralist and theologian, and possess a heart in which morality—pure *Christian* morality—is established in the love and fame of the Omnipotent. The school that is wanting in the influence of such a heart, is without the vital spark. We ask not for sectarianism—it is the bane of true morality and religion. Neither do we ask for that moral instruction or religion that comes in the cold formal prayer. It is that religious morality which acts in every action, breathes in every breath, lives in every life—that which from its abundance in the heart flows in every vein, and lends its sweet and benign influence all around—that should adorn the teacher's instruction: nor should the Word of God be misapplied. Let Nature speak in her thousand ways, and let the teacher be her interpreter.

Thus we have said sufficient for the Theory of Education. Let us be excused for dismissing this, and taking up the Practice as pursued in our Public Schools, the text books, the system, and the various *vexata questio* to which they give rise.

If a few weak-minded teachers have condemned us against the sacrilege of criticising the system, *we do not apprehend the result.*

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